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REPORT ON THE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

I. The Agency's Language Development Program is approaching its third birthday in February 1960. It is time to examine the activities of the Program and to attempt to read from them the successes and deficiencies of the Program as it is now operating.

As originally conceived, the LDP was a systematic arrangement for rewarding efforts applied by members of the Agency to the successful learning of foreign languages. It was assumed that the needs of the Agency for FL competences were so great that almost any effort applied to the learning of foreign languages would be productive. The major emphasis of the LDP was placed on voluntary learning in off-duty hours, with proportionately smaller awards for training undertaken by direction during duty hours. The result of this emphasis was the growth of a large program of instruction in FL's on an off-duty basis, in addition to the regular duty-hours instruction which already existed. An important by-product of the accompanying Proficiency Testing Program was to be an inventory of the Agency's FL proficiencies based for the first time on tested proficiency. The compilation of the roster is still not complete - at present it embraces the tested proficiencies of approximately 25 percent of the total Agency complement. Nevertheless, the roster can give valuable guidance, together with statistics from the Language Training Programs, on the total effects achieved to date. There is already sufficient evidence in the records to indicate that the first phase of the LDP is drawing to a close. This first phase might be called the phase of general language development and information gathering.

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The attached statistical studies on awards in directed language training and voluntary language training represent the information gained in the first three years of the LDP. These statistics indicate, on the basis of a superficial reading, that tremendous interest has been aroused in the subject of foreign language learning. The numbers of people involved in language learning have been large. However, a closer look at 25X1A



In these days of austere budgets and shrunken ceilings the questions have been asked repeatedly, "What's wrong with our Language Development Program? Are we getting enough return for the money expended? Can we cut down on the amounts expended"? The answer appears to be that we have spent large sums for only modest gains in usable proficiency in the people otherwise equipped to use them. It should not, however, be concluded from this answer that the LDP has failed. Much of the expenditure of money has gone into the experience and information without which the second, or planned language development, phase of the program would not be possible.

The major deficiency of the LDP, as it is now constituted, is that it is diffuse and general. No specific goals have been set. The individual is encouraged to further his own personal goals, without any guidance being given to him as to how his personal goals fit the needs of the Agency. After the first flush of excitement about the program, many people have come to the realization that they can be paid awards for language learning

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which can scarcely be interpreted as useful to the Agency. Many are embarrassed by the apparently aimless largess heaped upon them by the Agency.

The reasons for these feelings do not lie primarily in the standard of the awards program, nor in the complicated administration of the standards. They lie rather in the fact that responsible supervisors agree on the general need for language proficiency in the Agency, but in practice, find themselves unable to give proper guidance to their personnel with respect to language training. This incongruity can only be removed if the Agency has specific goals and standards related to Agency needs and if these standards and goals are explained to and understood by supervisors and personnel of the Agency, and finally, if concerted action is taken to attain these goals.

It must be said that standards do exist independently in certain parts of the organization. There are divisions and branches which have set up their own modest training and proficiency standards and are doing their best under trying conditions to live up to them. It is, of course, no accident that precisely these divisions and branches are gradually achieving a level of foreign language competence suitable to the jobs which they must do.

## II. Factors involved in the Revision of the Language Development Program:

### A. Language Training Programs:

The Agency has, at present, two language training programs, i.e. the regular daytime (directed) program and the Voluntary Program. In

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general it can be said that the former is not being used sufficiently and the latter is over-extended. This state of affairs is attributable to the lack of planning and direction in the Agency's Language Development Program.

The VLTP is the creature of the Language Development Program. It came into being as a result of the responsibility of the D/TR to furnish all reasonable opportunities for language training, both directed and voluntary, under the Language Development Program. The VLTP has produced some worthwhile results in its 2-1/2 years of operation (See attachment A). Among these worthwhile results, the major ones are increased interest in language training generally, the identification of talented individuals who should be trained further, and the opportunity for many individuals with some proficiency to increase and maintain usable proficiency.

On the debit side we see the result of the lack of clearly defined goals for the program. Of the 1096 individuals trained thus far in the VLTP more than 800 were trained in French, German, Russian and Spanish. 36% of the students enrolled dropped out before completing one trimester. There is considerable evidence that many of the people being trained in the VLTP are not in the categories of personnel who can be expected to contribute their knowledge to the accomplishment of the Agency's mission. The program has cost approximately \$140,000 to date.

The problem is to define definite goals for the VLTP and to administer it in a way which will achieve these goals and eliminate the non-productive group. This can best be done by phasing out the

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elementary courses, starting with the common languages, e.g. French, German, Spanish, and Italian; 80-90% of the non-productive group are in these classes. This will mean that those individuals who want to start studying a language will be forced to start in one of the less common languages which are in short supply in the Agency. If they are successful in the program, they will acquire a knowledge of the language which can be brought to an operationally useful level in a much shorter period of directed training than would normally be the case, thus solving part of the problem of training in the more difficult languages. By preserving the upper level classes in the common languages, the VLTP would contribute to the useful knowledge of these languages in the Agency. This can be done with much less money that we have previously spent, and will result in a smaller and much more efficient program.

As mentioned earlier the directed training program is suffering from too few students. It is here that the lack of orderly planning for language development shows most clearly. (See Attachment B) We have spent large sums of money developing a small professional staff of highly trained linguists supported by an increasingly well-trained staff of native instructors. We have taught many students in this program and it is not an exaggeration to say that they have been trained as well here as they could have been anywhere in the country. There has, however, been a constant problem of lack of planning in connection with directed training. Requirements have been given us at the last minute for courses which require much advance preparation and, in some cases, the hiring of additional personnel. Classes have been started on the

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basis of requests and have virtually died for lack of students after the program was underway. Selection of students has been poor in many cases, and we have been forced to teach poor students to the detriment of others in the classes.

These things are, however, only symptoms of the real difficulty; namely, the lack of acceptance in practice of thorough training in foreign languages. This lack of acceptance and much of the poor planning has been the direct result of lack of attention to language training by responsible officials above the branch chief level. The branch chief needs support in the planning of training which he is not getting. What the branches need is policy guidance on who shall be trained plus a mechanism for making people available for training without wrecking the operation of the Headquarters branch and disrupting the flow of replacements to the field. In many cases the detailed planning of training has been left to individuals of much lower degree than the branch chiefs because the present mechanism is acknowledged to be almost hopeless.

The effect upon our staff of this gradual drying-up of requirements for directed training in a time when every other Agency of the government and ~~many~~ many private institutions are loaded to capacity with willing, eager, competent students has been profound. The damage to professional pride which results from the expensive and time-consuming preparation of courses which are not fully utilized, coupled with the processing of applications for short-term tutorial training at commerical schools will ultimately result in the loss of our best professional staff personnel.

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At present there are seven languages which appear to be significant in terms of directed training in the Agency. These are French, German, Russian, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and Arabic. In addition, some training has been done in Greek, Turkish, Czech, Persian, and Romanian.

With its present strength in staff and contract personnel, the Language and Area School is capable of approximately 500 hours of instruction per week, if fully employed. This is the equivalent of 16 full-time language courses running concurrently. Under the present method of operation the school has been spreading this capability over anywhere from 15 - 20 languages in an attempt to satisfy existing requirements. The result has been that courses in the major languages have been scheduled too infrequently, and the range of courses available in the major languages has been too small for maximum effectiveness.

By eliminating all languages but the seven priority languages listed above from the internal directed training schedule the Language and Area School could almost double its strength in these languages, making the daytime, directed training program more responsive to the needs of the Agency. Such a move as this is, of course, only one possible way of making our language training facilities more effective. It has the advantage of being based on the observation of actual training for the past several years. It would presuppose a solid directed effort to utilize the language training facilities as fully as possible to improve the language competence of the Agency in a small number of priority language targets. It would, furthermore, impose a necessity for additional advance planning to take care of requirements for training in other, less usual languages. However,

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in this respect it would not differ from any other plan which could be expected to produce desirable results.

B. Priorities and Requirements:

Absolutely central to any talk of a well-planned, rational Language Development Program is the problem of priorities and requirements. The present LDP has established a list of 48 (earlier 39) languages which were judged to have enough importance to the Agency to be made awardable. The awards scale was based solely on assumed degrees of difficulty, with proportionately higher awards for the more difficult languages. This system awards the individual on the basis of the amount of effort which he must presumably expend to learn a given language. Inherent in this system also is the assumption that 25X1A competences in the easier languages are also in more abundant supply.



ment overseas). The only procedure which was provided for establishing priorities was the provision that languages could be withdrawn from the list as it could be established that a satisfactory level of competence had been achieved. In three years, no language has been withdrawn from the list, indeed nine languages have been added.

By way of contrast, let us examine the proposed Language Awards Program of the Department of State (see attachment C). It gives evidence at every point of being based on a firm foundation of knowledge of present competences, future requirements, and priorities. The State Department's plan, for example, does not include awards for the so-called "world-languages", i.e. French, German, Spanish, Italian,

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and Portuguese. Should we hasten to emulate this feature of the State Department's plan in a revision of our Program? Not unless we are able to convince ourselves that we are adequately supplied with sufficient competence in these languages to meet our present and reasonable future requirements. The State Department was able to take this step because it has had a directed training program in these languages for a number of years and because it is aware of its requirements and competences in them.

The method of classifying languages used in the State Department's system is also worth noting. The assignment of languages to award categories is based on the consideration of three factors; namely, difficulty of the language for English speakers, the priority of need for the competence by the Foreign Service, and the degree of difficulty experienced in getting people to serve at the posts where the language is being used. Furthermore, the achievement award is approximately half the amount paid to an individual when he is actually using the language on the job. This represents an attempt to reward the individual in direct proportion to his contribution to the Foreign Service. I have not used this example because I believe that it is the pattern which the Agency should necessarily follow, but rather because it clearly reveals sound management planning, based on adequate information.

I have seen evidences of the same sort of planning in the military services, USIA, ICA, and NSA. Our organization, too, has reached the point where it can no longer afford the luxury of ad hoc language

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training requirements and priorities.

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In Agency Regulation [REDACTED] which established the Language Development Program, the responsibility for establishing language requirements was fixed as follows:

Para. 1.b.(4) "The current and future language requirements of the Agency, as established by the Deputy Directors, will constitute the goals toward which the efforts of staff personnel of the Agency, in acquiring and maintaining language proficiency, will be directed".

Para. 2.a. "The Deputy Directors will:

(1) Determine the current and projected requirements for language competence in their areas for the full discharge of their responsibilities".

Thus far, the requirements have been no more specific than the list of 39 languages in the regulation. In an era of tight budgets, when every other aspect of Agency operations is being examined minutely and priorities are being established, the Agency cannot afford to overlook the necessity for applying the same procedures to its Language Development Program.

The failure of responsible officials to supply sufficiently detailed policy guidance on language requirements has certainly not been due to their failure to appreciate the necessity of doing so. It has rather resulted from the fact that no mechanism has been available to them for accomplishing this desirable goal.

The Language Development Committee, with the approval and support of the D/TR, can perform a powerful service for the good of the Agency

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by assuming a leadership role in devising the necessary mechanism for a more specific determination of requirements. Only if and when this responsibility is carried out successfully can the Agency exercise anything more than gross budgetary controls over language development in the Agency. Only then can a controlled Language Awards Program become the management tool it is supposed to be.

It is recognized that sound planning of a Language Development Program with firm, specific requirements implies changes in present personnel-handling policies within the Agency. The question which is posed is whether the Agency can continue to temporize on in an area in which almost \$1,000,000 was expended in Fiscal Year 1959.

These questions can only be answered if information which is presently available concerning the needs of the Agency for language competence is collected, collated, and employed as the basis for a management decision on orderly language development in the Agency.

The Language Development Committee can provide the impetus and propose the means for a fact-finding survey of the Agency's language needs. This survey should be in terms of the numbers of individuals needed with competences in at least the seven priority languages mentioned above, or preferably in the languages on the awardable list. It should ignore, for the time being, all requirements except those for the filling of overseas, working-level jobs. On the basis of these figures, plus the roster of language competences which now exist, requirements can be stated and plans made for fulfilling the requirements. The survey should be purely a fact-finding mission to ascertain requirements. When such information is available, it will

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be possible to draw up and submit for approval recruitment, training, and language awards plans aimed at obtaining the necessary competences and putting them to use in the proper places.

The means by which a survey can be conducted are many and range from requesting replies to a carefully-worded questionnaire, to an IG investigation. These means should be fully discussed in the Language Development Committee and with others in the Agency to arrive at a means which will result in the best results with the least amount of inconvenience and friction. Whatever means is adopted should be proposed for adoption into Regulation [REDACTED]

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C. Language Awards Program:

The present Language Awards Program is a broad-scale attempt to reward effort applied to all languages which can be considered to have interest for the Agency. Its very broadness has brought it to the point where changes must be made in order to hold the total expenditures within prescribed budgetary limits which are much narrower than those under which the program was originally conceived.

There is need to consider whether the program should be continued essentially in its present form with minor revisions to effect economies or whether it should be revamped in its entirety to achieve more orderly language development than 2-1/2 years of experience have shown to be the case under the present program. Any changes recommended under the present definition of requirements can only be of the budgetary variety. If a decision is made to revamp the program completely, the form of the new program will have to be based on new and more specific definitions of priorities and needs within the Agency. If

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agreement on such a course of action could be obtained, it would be desirable to continue the present program, with the reductions which have been made already, until such time as sufficient information on requirements is available to support a revision of the program. In this connection, it would be possible and desirable to make the beginning date of a new program coincide with the beginning of Fiscal Year 1961.

Some desirable features of a new program would be:

1. Abolition of awards for elementary level of competence on the ground that it accounts for a disproportionate share of awards without, in itself, contributing to useful competency in the Agency. As an alternative, the award could be postponed until Intermediate level was reached.
2. Provisions to award use of an awardable level of competence on the job, distinct from achievement and maintenance.
3. Provisions for awards to counteract tendency of personnel to avoid learning a language whose use would require assignment to a post considered undesirable.
4. Establishment of a "Priority" category of awardable languages on the basis of critical need for competences.

### III. Recommendations:

- A. Seek Career Council approval of a plan to set specific requirements for Language Development leading to a revised Language Development Program to begin in Fiscal Year 1961.
- B. Continue the present program under previously formulated plans for budgetary limitation until the new program goes into effect.

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